Informant: LMP-S23
Interviewer: Michael Jones and Claudia Hernandez
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Interview Begins

S23: [Inaudible]. I have a lot of old books that I've had for many years and so this one I've had [Inaudible] when, gee, 1982 I guess it was. 1980.

Michael Jones: Is that healing herbs?

S23: Yes, but there was a language bookstore and I found that one there.

Claudia Hernandez: Oh, they had it at the Spanish-speaking bookstore?

S23: Yeah, they-now, it's moved to First Street. It's actually religious materials, but they had a section on herbs and different, different things. Then, this was-I was likely to buy it. To find it, better well.

CH: But it's in English, huh?

S23: Yeah, it is in English and it's only on arthritis. 'Cause I bought one in Spanish so then when I found this, you know, I kind of compare many of things dealing with what my mother or I learned from her and other people. So, it's very good, a good resource.

CH: Okey doke.

S23: I've been looking for all my books.

CH: So, I guess we'll follow you.

S23: Ok.

CH: So we can get a tour your garden.

S23: Ok. We'll go to the back first because I have more of the herbs there, but I have some different places. You can come around this way.

MJ: Oh.

S23: And I actually don't have a lot of dirt space, but every nook and cranny is filled with stuff. This year I planted some vegetables. I have green beans here. [Inaudible], but this is that [?] (artemecia). It's not the [?] (diestafiate), but it's-I use it a lot for my alters. It's

aromatic, but it's used in many teas, I think. But I don't use it for the teas because I never did before, but it's one of the varieties. And in the literature that I find, it's interspersed. But it's a good [Inaudible].

CH: Oh.

S23: And it's very aromatic and so I use it in my alters. I dry it and make bundles to burn it as a ceremonial and its aroma.

CH: Do you know if other people use it ceremonially, like drying it up and burning it?

S23: I haven't seen other people, but I'm sure they do. I mean, just brushing against it. It's really beautiful.

CH: Oh, yeah. That's what I like.

S23: Yeah.

CH: It leaves a [Inaudible].

S23: Yeah.

CH: And when you say it's a fumigant, what do you mean by that? Like-

S23: It's too deter insects. The traditional one, when I was a kid, bed bugs and fleas, things that you would put it under your pillow or around the house. That's how it was used as-fresh, you know.

CH: Nice.

S23: It stays fragrant for a long time, but then it gets messy. Although this is kind of a small plot, the rest is kind of-this is like my outdoor studio. I cover it up so that it doesn't get all dusty, but I have my paints and stuff out here. But I have-some of the, I have several sages and [?] (perdolares) everywhere this year. But I have a lot of [?] (epazote) and it just grows everywhere. And I use to cut it because it was-I considered it invasive, but then when I cut it all off I had to wait for some to grow when I wanted some. So, I just let it. I just trim it, but it's a weed actually here in southern California.

CH: So, it's growing like a weed. How do you plant this one, then?

S23: No, no. It seats itself and in fact I just trim the tops because it has thousands of seeds and I have enough, you know. If it grows in a place where I don't want it then I'll take it off, but for the most part I let it go. Another one's growing there. They have lots of chiles, but I have the different sages. This sage is the white sage and this one here is a-

CH: This one?

S23: Yeah, that's another kind of sage. This is the culinary sage and that's the Mexican, they call it the Mexican sage. And I use it quite a bit.

CH: The Mexican sage? Do you use that for cooking or-?

S23: I use it for cooking, but this one I add a little bit in the tea when I have the mint tea, but just a little. It's quite strong. But my mother and not just my mother, my neighbor says that it's used for-they call it [?] (saldia).

CH: Oh.

S23: But it's used for a lot of things. But mostly I use it for cooking and also for the aromatic part. I make sweet bread (pan dulce). So, here I have mostly herbs for cooking and let's see what else do I have here. Oh, the rue (ruda).

CH: Oh, yeah.

S23: And I started it again. I had cut it off and I kind of-it didn't grow back. I cut it too much and it dried so I got another piece. So, when it gets bigger I'm going to make some cuttings there. Like so I have a lot of pots and make a lot of cuttings.

CH: To replant.

S23: Yeah, and when I put them it on the ground it will get very pretty. Hopefully, healthy.

CH: So, do you use this type of sage?

S23: Yes, I do.

CH: And when you use it, which part of the plant do you use?

S23: Well, I use the floret sic tips. I just nip off the tops.

CH: So, basically like the-

S23: Yeah, uh huh.

CH: The tops.

S23: Oh. Yeah.

CH: Do you ever use-

S23: Crusters.

CH: [Inaudible]?

S23: Well, you know, I save the flowers because I don't know learning about that because I think that it's used, all the parts of the plant are used, but I haven't learned yet for what purpose they are. So, I save them anyway. But I-but when you keep snipping you'll get blooming. It gets bushy. So, I'll hopefully have flowers all the time if I need to use them fresh.

CH: Do you snip it with your hand?

S23: Oh, yeah. I just do this. Just the tops. But if I want a larger piece of course, I go-and it has so many-I kind of balance it. I snip from all over and yeah. Now, maybe I-

CH: I've heard that some people have a certain belief about when you should cut the plant or snip from a plant. Like some people like to take during the morning. Or that they feel it's best if you take it during the morning.

S23: Yeah, it is best during the morning. Like I water only in the morning and that's when I come out and snip off what I need. Then, what I don't use I put it in a bowl and it's dried so I'll use it as seasoning. And if I put it right, I'll just keep it and eventually I'll use it as a potpourri for when I bring [?] (copal). And then this is the [Inaudible] I put charcoal, but I put all these dried herbs around it so that it gets a very-

CH: A more aromatic...

S23: Yeah. And when I don't have a [?] (Copal), I just use these. Especially this one and then the wood, the whole wood. So, then my daughter knows more about the ceremonies because she's been really learning about the native American[s], but also some of other indigenous groups. She's really versed in that ceremonial area. So, she's learn-she's combining her healing with all these kind of things.

CH: By indigenous principles?

S23: Yes, yes.

CH: That's good.

S23: Yeah, she's extending. More than myself because she's practicing it on a regular basis.

MJ: [Inaudible].

CH: Yeah. When you use that type of sage and you use it for teas-

S23: Yes, or I just snip a leaf.

CH: Just like a leaf-

S23: Yeah, a leaf or two.

CH: Is that good enough for one?

S23: Yes, because I use it with either [?] (hierba buena) or with [?] (cedron). That's the main-I just put one or two leafs.

CH: Oh, it's nice. So, it's very simple, huh?

S23: Yeah, very sim-well, yes, there's two ways. When you boil it. The dried ones I boil. Well, some of it. Like with oregano (oregano) 'cause it's so strong, but oregano (oregano) is for a real bad congestion. To loosen the phlegm.

CH: To loosen.

S23: Yeah, loosen the phlegm. We go back and forth.

CH: Yeah, I know I get tongue-tied sometimes.

S23: And so that's pretty strong and I boil it. Put the dried one in and then just let it-usually I just lower the flame, cover it and turn it off and then just-it gets very, very strong. So, then like I told you before that I just dilute it when it's hot. I just add a little more water in the cup, but I leave the stuff there in full strength in the pot and then I just put it away. Oh, no. Go away. Bye. The kids tied her. I guess she came loose. Go on. Go on, Heidi.

CH: Hi, Heidi. Would you like some sage, Heidi? Does Heidi ever eat any of the herbs?

S23: She's tried them, but she'll regurgitate them.

CH: [Inaudible].

S23: They're good for her I think. And this one is-I'm also happy it took because I've tried it. I just left it alone with-and this is another kind of small sage.

CH: Looks similar to this one.

S23: Yeah, it's called [?] (Santo Lina). It's a seed in the wild, in the desert, but it's another kind of sage. I'm just collecting them, as many sages and I'm just learning more about them because indigenous people have used sages, you know, forever. So, I just want to have them, collect them and then learn about them as I go and I've [Inaudible]. The ones that I've always used are the ones I use most of the time.

CH: So, that one, what's it called again?

S23: [?] (Santo Lina). Grey [?] (Santo Lina).

CH: Grey [?] (Santo Lina)?

S23: Uh-huh. It's, it's-

CH: Curly.

S23: Yeah, and it's a kind of sage. It might not be a true sage, but it's interesting how so many of them are-the gray, the sages-are characteristic and you know they're all aromatic.

CH: In that they're gray?

S23: Yeah. Aromatic.

CH: Yeah, not as strong as this one.

S23: You know, you have to-no. No, you have to crush them a little bit.

CH: Not this one as much.

S23: No, no.

MJ: Ok.

CH: But this one smells almost a little lemony.

S23: Yeah.

CH: It's nice. So, do you know if this one is prepared in teas as well? Or foods?

S23: Well, it's used in foods, but like I showed you this-go, go. Bye-bye. No. Be nice. One time I thought kids were gonna take her away. Watch her for me for a while. Excuse me. JP.

MJ: Let me turn it off.

S23: Or Sarah.

Tape Pauses

Tape Continues

S23: And I didn't want it to overtake, you know, to shape my plants. And it's actually nicer 'cause I couldn't reach the face, but I had little trees growing everywhere now. So, I have-I'm gonna pull them out and I'm gonnna leave them alone and putting them in pots and give them away.

CH: I like this tree. It's fruiting really well.

S23: Yes. It gives really good-

MJ: What kind of a tree is it?

S23: It's a fig.

CH: So, do you have certain beliefs about who can look at plants or who cannot? Like my mom always tells one of my sisters. She says, "Oh, mija, don't go in the backyard 'cause I have some baby strawberries coming out," or some baby this or baby that plant and "I don't want you to look at it because you have strong eye sight." My mom just have this belief that some people have a strong eye sight and just by looking at something you could cause it to-

S23: Cause damage or-

CH: To damage or to spurt its growth, you know.

S23: Oh, well-

CH: Do you know anything like-

S23: Well, I've heard of that, but I don't particularly have that belief, but I remember my aunts and some of the-especially the older people-they have that belief about somebody had a strong eye (ojo)-strength (fuerza), you know?

CH: Mh-h.

S23: And it was more like for babies then plants, anyways. Children and they were very careful in the early, you know, very early infancy like three months. Or up to three or four months. That was something. Newborns, in fact. Newborns. But I never practiced that.

CH: Yeah, my mom has those beliefs too about the newborns to be cared for, but she also has it for plants. I wondered if maybe you did or your mom had.

S23: Not for the plants. I don't think so. But they did say that you had to have a hand for cutting them and transplanting. That was something. And then I kind of when I'm taking a plant and I'm gonna to get a cutting or when it's-usually I make a cutting when they break off. I just can't through it away.

CH: Right.

S23: But if I'm going to, I kind of give it thanks, you know. "Thank you."

CH: Ok.

S23: Yes, because they give so much. They're so valuable to me. The plants.

CH: Yeah.

S23: And actually, I have a small collection compared to what my mother had. And over the years, well, she's been gone eleven years, some of the plants, you know, died or they've plastered the house. She didn't get to see it like-so, a lot were straight because they were against the house, around. They did mine, too. So, I'm trying to recoop-you know, recapture those, all the plants that she use to have. So, this is why I have a lot of new plants. More yield plants and I have them in pots. And then I just don't have room to put them in. So, I like to have them in pots 'cause then they're controlled for myself back here.

CH: Yeah.

S23: And when I don't want the dogs or the kids to break [them], I have to put it back here. So, it's growing here. I don't have any back there. It's mostly shade plants, so, but here they're more accessible and it's like my little haven here. So-

CH: It's very nice. I like it.

S23: Thank you.

CH: Did your mom also have a reverence for the plants like thanking them or asking permission of them to cut?

S23: Oh, yes. She would actually articulate, you know, as she's doing it. Like if they were people. "Look, how kind. Thank you, here." It was just really nice. So, I...

CH: Yeah, my mom does the same thing. She talks to her plants. She says, "You have talk to them. You have to be kind to them-"

S23: Yeah.

CH: "Cause they grow better. "

S23: Well, I know I'm kind to them. I do give thanks, you know, for giving me another cutting and especially when they taste ripe. They're very valuable to me. I have [?] (tomillo) here, but you know, like I said many of them are culinary. [?] (comillo) and

basil (albaca[1]). 'Albaca' is basil and this one here. And this is another kind of basil. And I wasn't sure 'cause it didn't have a bloom in it. It didn't have a-I wasn't sure, but now that it's blooming and this is more of it.

CH: Oh, that's more basil?

S23: Yeah, yeah.

CH: Is that the same type as this?

S23: Yes. That I broke it up. [Inaudible]. Well, I wasn't sure. I thought it was a flower, but it is the basil (albaca). I saw some in a nursery. Sometimes I'll do that and see if I find it and my neighbor. She lives two houses down. Teresita. She has a lot of knowledge about plants that I didn't know and I know that she uses basil for other things. And I didn't know it was called basil, so I thought it must be some real, you know, unusual plant. Then I learned it was basil, so I have to go over there and get that information again. She was always visiting my mother, but I don't see her. She tends to her husband whose ill. So, I talk to her-I saw her one day as I was walking by and I said, "I have to talk to you about the plants. I want you to brush me up on all your knowledge or some of it that I have-." "Well, whenever you want. Come in." But she's so busy. She's-

CH: So, these two are basils?

S23: Yes.

CH: And what do you use them for?

S23: Well, this is mostly-I use them in salads and to eat them, but you know, some of the-using the fresh plants-and Elena has really coached me on that-is almost preventative. Along with some of the other green vegetable plants. That they're preventative for cancer and other major diseases. So, it's like a fortifier and she can tell me more about it. You could ask her more about this. So, now, I want to, I keep basil. I'm trying to augment them and have more more of the plants because I want to put some in the ground because they might be more permanent than the bush here. But I'm just starting them. I have them here.

CH: Yeah. The smell sticks to your fingers, too.

S23: Yeah, it's very aromatic. [Inaudible]. There's so many varieties. Some always looking at the books. [I] should get a little tray to pick up all these-

CH: It has some chiles, too.

S23: Yeah, I have lots of chiles and some [that] grew, I had [Inaudible] I brought from New Mexico. It got, it doesn't do well here 'cause of the humidity, but I had it here. So

[1] Albaca or another spelling is albahaca.

many of the seeds fell and then when I took it down, I caught a lot of the seeds. And so I'm getting chiles everywhere. They've just grown. There in-I think-

CH: Oh, so they kind of just spread?

S23: Yeah, I have several chile plants in odd places, but these my daughter gave me for my birthday.

CH: They're nice.

S23: Yeah. And so this Wednesday-I haven't put them in the ground yet because some of the-I have a planche in here that grew here.

CH: A plantane thing?

S23: Yeah. And-

CH: That's this one, right?

S23: Yes. Then rosemary (romero). That's a very valuable plant to choose, not only for cooking, but for the, you know, for your skin, for the hair and for medicinal purposes, too, that we talked about.

CH: My mom used to give me rosemary (romero) baths. I think once-

S23: Yes, they're very-

CH: Or twice a week when I was little. I remember she would just give me baths in rosemary (romero) all the time. I thought it was because our last name was Romero.

S23: Oh, it is Romero.

CH: Yeah. My-Hernandez Romero. The last, last one.

S23: This was-I have a white sage. That one is used for teas. [Inaudible]. Here I have another chile. There's chiles growing everywhere. And this is different from the others. That's why I-

CH: [Inaudible].

S23: Oh, yeah. It's one plant, so I want to-I haven't-it might be getting too big for this pot so hopefully I could put...see I have chiles everywhere. I hope they're the New Mexico chile, the hot chile, but those are little ones. I have one in the front, too. So, these are most of my-there's another fig growing here. And then I'm growing gourds 'cause all those-oh, it's getting bigger. But they really take over last year. They filled the fence and

they went it to the neighbor's yard, so this time I've been trying to keep them contained. Like trim them off.

CH: Trim them off.

S23: And so I'm going to-I'll use the gourds for the altars and paint them. I mean, clean them and cut them and I may paint some of them. I'm not sure.

CH: They're nice.

S23: They are.

CH: They're very shapely.

S23: I have huge ones. This one fell off so it got deformed because it wasn't-but when you leave them on the vine, they stay in a nice shape.

CH: So, you just let them dry on the vine?

S23: Yeah. I learned that that's the best place 'cause once I did cut one because it was-well, they cut the bougainvillea and I cut it and it got-but I didn't know any better. I put it on a pot, I think. And it got squishy. And so, those seeds I just let them. I put the pieces in there so and so it grew again. I didn't plant it this year. It re-seeded itself.

CH: It's nice. So, do you use any of the chiles? Medicinally?

S23: You know, what the chiles [Inaudible] for a stye?

CH: Oh, for a stye?

S23: Yes, but it's just like that. The real hot chile. My mother would use chile [?] (huerrito). It's a yellow chile and you heat it. And then you just rub the tip on the stye, you know.

CH: So, if I had the stye right here, I would just-

S23: Yeah. On the outside of course.

CH: Oh.

S23: You heat it so it's hot. The heat and it just, it's so strong, you know, and just for a little bit. You put it. You just apply it there. Rub it a little bit. Take it off and then apply it again. And it does. It almost like, in a way it numbs it. It does work.

CH: It works.

S23: Yeah. That's why it's useful.

CH: Like how many times would you have to do that for the stye to go away?

S23: I don't know. I think I can't remember how many times, but probably a few times, two or three. One or two days.

CH: Ok.

S23: Because it-

CH: And it goes away.

S23: Yeah.

CH: And early you said this was the [?] (verdolada).

S23: Yeah, that's the [?] (verdolada).

CH: Can you remind me what that's for again?

S23: Well, I use it to cook, also, but it's very rich in iron. And so it's a good, nutritious food to have as a preventative and blood fortifier.

CH: Do you cook it or do you-?

S23: I sauté it, just barely. Just like when you do spinach, when you don't boil it. You just sauté it with seasonings, usually garlic and onion. And you just add it to-I add it to an egg, but just as a side thing.

CH: Oh. That's [Inaudible]. Kind of like [?] (nopales) or-

S23: Yeah, the same. You prepare them the same-my mother would prepare [?] (quilites). Do you know what [?] (quilites) are?

CH: I've heard about them.

S23: [?] (Quilites) is like a wild spinach. I haven't seen that for a long time, but we'd go up into the hills and that was a staple. And that's very rich in iron and has some vitamin c and those were prepared like that. Just a wild spinach, they'd call it.

CH: Nice.

S23: It looks kind of like that, but it's dark.

CH: Like this?

S23: It's a dark green. It resembles the shape of the [?] (epazote), but-

CH: It's dark.

S23: Yeah. I haven't seen that for a long time.

CH: What's this?

S23: I think it's a chile.

CH: Oh, really?

S23: Yeah. The other day I cut the one-I think it was-I cut it because I was waiting to see what it was. And then it had little, little-the chile has little blossoms. Very tiny blossoms and then the pod starts to form. Well, the plant that I just took out of there was like that, but once it had little beans and they're poisonous. It's a kind of-I don't know if it was gynsum weed, but it's a kind of berry. Not that wild. I just cut it off because I thought if my dog eats it…

CH: Yeah.

S23: And I looked for it in my books, but that's the only thing it looked like. But I remember that as a weed before.

CH: Better safe than sorry.

S23: And it was really pretty. I waited until it bloomed and then I cut it off.

CH: Does your [?] (verdolada) also travel on its own?

S23: Yes.

CH: [Inaudible].

S23: It grows everywhere. There's some here.

CH: Oh, yes, I see it there.

S23: And it's interesting because I bought some soil to add to the pots and I have more [?] (verdoladas) than I've had for a long, long time. So, they might just come in the soil, someplace. They just move everywhere. They're-

CH: That's good.

S23: I guess they're considered like a weed, but you could grow [them][2]. They do have-if you wait too long to cook them, they have a lot of seed. But I use them anyway. I try and cut. Like those are good to cook right now. Those pieces. I'll cut them in the morning or tonight when the sun goes down.

CH: When the sun goes down, it's when you're going to cut them as well?

S23: Yeah, I think so when it's cool because when you cut them like-I think it's and then they have an open stem. The sun can, you know, bake them.

CH: Ok.

S23: Early morning is best.

CH: Do you use the figs in this [Inaudible]?

S23: Ooh! [Noise].

CH: Or-

S23: Well, you know, I know that they're used when for constipation. And you know, it stands to reason that you have so many tiny seeds and they act as a…

CH: Sort of laxative.

S23: Yeah. So, I love figs, too.

CH: And these are your bougainvilleas?

S23: Yes. Yes.

CH: They're not flowering right now.

S23: No. They were cut down. They were all over the…

CH: Oh, all here.

S23: But my son is going to redo the roof here, so I had to cut it all down. And I want to try and continue like the one I have here. It's never-it doesn't have a [Inaudible]. When we came in, I don't know if you noticed-

CH: Oh, yeah, I saw [Inaudible].

S23: Yeah, and this is an orange one.

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[2] Words in [] left unsaid by interviewer, but inserted by transcriber.

CH: That's really pretty.

S23: That's really pretty. So, it will start blooming.

CH: Now, do you use-now, there are so many different colors of bougainvilleas. Somebody told me only the red ones are used medicinally. Is that true? Or does it matter?

S23: You know, I'm not sure, but originally the-I believe the ones that are different colors are hybrids, so it stands to reason that the original colors-the really dark fuchsia, the bright fuchsia-because you can see at least one or two blooms of another color when they're blooming. Like this one will have a red one and then the one that I have is white. It's a pink. I think they call it senole and you'll find one or two bright fuchsia blooms. Just one sticking out and you know, its origin appears in at least one or two of the little blooms.

CH: Right. That's interesting. That's an interesting thought.

S23: It might be so.

CH: So, this is your plant.

S23: Yes, it is.

CH: I thought maybe it was the [Inaudible]-

S23: No.

CH: Neighbor's plant.

S23: No, she has avocadoes (aguacates).

CH: Yes, I see that. Do you ever get any of those on this side?

S23: Oh, she gets so mad. Even if they're growing like this, if she sees me, she'll say, "Those are not yours." And I'll get them. (Laughter). I mean, you know, they're growing on my side. So…

CH: Yeah, it's great.

S23: In fact, it's a wonderful plant. The neighbors just redid their roof. There was a whole branch on them and they had to cut it.

CH: Wow. Wow.

S23: She was so mad because they did, but because she thought it was just to get the avocadoes (aguacates).

CH: Oh.

S23: She's very possessive of them, which is-

CH: Would you like some avocadoes (aguacates)?

MJ: Have you heard of them used medicinally?

S23: I've heard of the olda avocado (aguacate) itself. You know, I think it was used for the skin. The pulp. But I have heard that it is. And I think that in one of my books I looked it up. I haven't used them. There is so much too learn. Just one of my interests now is using the plants, the common plants that we know. The fruit plants and vegetables that are common that I don't have to go pick it so many times. Especially my neighbor would tell me about plants that, you know, I said, "Well, where do I get them?" You find them in the botánicas dried. Or at the (herbs) hierbas en Mexico, everything is dried.

CH: Dried.

S23: And so I said: But I'm sure that many of the plants that we do use-and she would always say, "The pear, too." That's too soothe your stomach after you've had diarrhea or intestinal, um, some serious intestinal illness. Like the [?] (agua de pino)?

CH: Mh-h.

S23: And pear. You know, pear nectar, that are soothing and they are, you know, besides the teas, of course, like [?] (hierba buena).

CH: Has she specified a particular kind of pear?

S23: No, I'm not really-sometimes I wonder: Were there just one kind when we-? Because they just say "pear." But, you know, of course, there's all these different varieties. But the one that I always remember was the yellow-I can't remember what they're called. They're not bosque. The bosque have the thicker-

CH: Bartlet?

S23: Yeah.

CH: I don't remember.

S23: I think it's the bartlet that's yellowish and softer. And that's the pear that I recall eating it when I was a child, so maybe that's the generic one. I'm not sure.

CH: Yeah. Maybe, maybe.

S23: But you know-

CH: As you said there are so many hybrids.

S23: But when I made a shake (licuado), that's the easiest one to use 'cause the skin is tender and in fact, that's the one I've used. I hadn't even, you know, put that together, used the reasoning because when you liquefy it, the skin just blends, you know. But the rest of it-the other kind-the skin-there's a peel (cascara). You know, the-

CH: Yeah.

S23: The green one? The basque is the one that I like, but I like the basque pear.

CH: The red ones are really sweet.

S23: Yeah.

CH: Nice. Now, when you liquefy fruits or herbs or vegetables to make into some type of a shake (licuado), do you use the pulp or do you strain it? And then just have the liquid? How do you-

S23: I just put the whole the thing. I just take the seeds out and the stem. I put the whole thing in, except for banana, of course. But I just use the whole-apples I put in. I guess I skin the apple. Peel the apple. Almost everything else, the strawberries-what else have I used? Kiwi. Put the whole thing-no, kiwi I peel it.

CH: Yeah.

S23: Other certain ones, I guess.

CH: I've heard though that you can actually eat the skin of a kiwi. As weird as that sounds, it's supposed to be good in fiber, high in fiber.

S23: Oh, I'm sure it is.

CH: Yeah, tough skin.

S23: Well, so is the fruit. You know, the fruit itself is high-

CH: Yeah.

S23: Is fibrous.

CH: Yeah. So, after you blend it all, do you then strain it or do you drink it right out?

S23: I just drink it with the pulp and all.

CH: Pulp and all. Is that the most beneficial way?

S23: I think so because you get the juice and then you get the fiber, too.

CH: So you get two shots in one.

S23: Yes.

CH: Ok.

MJ: In here, are there other plants in the yard that you use medicinally that we don't see?

S23: Yes, they're on the side and on the front of the house.

MJ: Oh, ok. So, ok, you wanna just go that way?

S23: I have the nasturtiums. I'm growing them because I use them in the salads, but I-again, Teresita, my friend, was saying that the leaves are also-the flowers are, well, could be used in a salad, but that they're good for remedies (remedios). But I'm not sure what it is yet. So, I have to find out about that one.

CH: The nasturtiums?

S23: Yeah.

MJ: [Inaudible].

CH: Yeah. You can eat the flowers.

S23: Yes. You could use-they're good in a salad, too.

CH: [Inaudible]. I make them with quesadillas, you know.

S23: Oh.

CH: Just quesadillas and just-

S23: Just-

CH: The flowers in the middle of the quesadilla.

S23: Just like the pumpkin flower (flor de calabasa).

CH: Exactly.

S23: Oh, I love those.

CH: That's where I got the idea.

S23: Ok. Well, I see. What do I have here? I have [?] (tomillo) and spearmint (hierba buena), but I wanted to try and find some pennyroyal (poleo). Although I don't think this the true spearmint (hierba buena) because the one that I want is the shiny, dark leaf which is the true spearmint. And this is a kind of spearmint (hierba buena), but I use it as spearmint (hierba buena) and it's not pennyroyal (poleo), but I want to get some pennyroyal (poleo) 'cause that was a staple. But it's so hard to tell. Unless you see them side by side, then you can see how-for me-you can see the different ones. But this is kind of the one that I use all the time and then…

CH: These are tasty.

S23: Yeah, they're very tasty.

CH: I put them in the tea. Make an iced tea. A sun tea. I was planning to put some out and I didn't put it out. For you. And let's see. Whitey. Are you holding-? Is she-? Oh, you don't have to hold her, dear. She'll-

Somebody: She's getting loose.

S23: You can let her go. I just wanted to contain her on this side. Let her go. She's not gonna bite anybody, but she's just a nuisance. This is Sarah. Say hello, dear. More [?] (verdoladas). This is the (?) [estafiate].

CH: This is the (?) [estafiate]?

S23: Yeah, I have it everywhere, too. And the plant that I'm looking for is a stalk and it has only this kind. But this is considered (?) [estafiate] as far as I can tell and so I use it as (?) [estafiate]. This is the one that is excellent for infections of the stomach and it's also like a nerve-

CH: Relaxer.

S23: Yeah, yeah. It's very bitter. You have to [Inaudible] use it.

CH: To sweeten the-?

S23: I put a little bit of sugar, but I try not to use sugar so much because the sugar is refined and I don't know. I feel that it diminishes its value.

CH: Oh. A lot of people believe that [Inaudible].

S23: And, let's see what-well, the lemon tree in front. I have the lemon leaves. Where's the other one that I have? Oh, the ones on the side.

CH: Your guava tree?

S23: Yes, guava (guayaba). That's right. This is like my mother's tree and there's actually two. This was planted as a cutting, a shoot from the one in front. That was the mother tree. So, this one I say it's mine now because it's on my side, but the other one has been pruned so much and it was damaged when they were plastering the-

CH: The front.

S23: The front. Stuccoing the house so it's kind of recuperated, but this one does very well. And the fruit itself is very beneficial. Heidi, be nice. Nice? Be nice.

CH: And so you have the lemon tree?

S23: Yeah, it's in the front. It's in the front yard. Yeah. I collect everything as you can see.

MJ: Yeah.

CH: I like that.

S23: Yeah. This is [?] (huele de noche). My-I don't remember what-I don't even see it myself, but I remember that it was used for something. My daughter hates it. She thinks it's a weird plant.

CH: She thinks it's a what?

S23: A weird. She says, "It gives you the creeps because it's very fragrant and when it blooms it has little, tiny balls." They're really pretty. They look like wax balls to me.

CH: I think that the little bits like this resemble lemons. For a second-

S23: I know it does.

CH: I thought that it was like a lemon tree.

S23: It does look…And my [?] (hierba del manzo).

CH: Does it smell by night?

S23: Yes. It's a night-blooming, night-blooming shade?

CH: Night-blooming shade?

S23: Night-blooming shade, I think it's called.

CH: I think that's what you call [Inaudible].

S23: It gives off aroma at night. It's night-blooming.

CH: I like it.

S23: And it gives so much seed it just pops up everywhere.

CH: Oh, I see.

S23: And of course, my [?] (hierba del manzo), this is the-I felt-I did find it in a book. It was-I hope I have it there. I said, "I found it." I knew I had it one of the books and they call it swamp leaf or swamp lily.

CH: Swamp-

S23: Swamp root. I can't-swamp something.

CH: For the [?] (hierba del manzo)?

S23: Yes. I don't know what this is. This crops up everywhere.

CH: What-oh, you wanna-?

S23: No. Then, I have the other guava (guayaba).

CH: Guava (guayaba).

S23: This was the main tree. It was a huge tree and it was cut down completely and then the lemon tree. We don't have cacti (nopales) any-oh, they have the cacti (nopales) back there. A little bit. Those are actually all my plants. So, I have a lot more to collect.

CH: That's a good selection. Is that your basic selection?

S23: Yeah.

CH: For now?

S23: Yes. [Inaudible].

CH: That you can't live without?

S23: Yes, but there's a few that I need to get. And oh, aloe vera (savila).

CH: Aloe vera (savila).

S23: Aloe vera.

CH: The aloe.

S23: And I had this one in the ground back there, but when they plastered the houses-this was six years ago-the ground was full of plaster and I took it out and I put it in a pot temporarily. So, it's been here, but it has so many shoots I'm gonna put it back.

CH: Yeah.

S23: It needs a lot of room, so I thought-my daughter put one back here. So, I hope it takes. 'Cause it needs a lot of-

CH: It grows really well.

S23: Yeah. It was huge, even more.

CH: Really?

S23: But you know, it starts going this, but it's a very valuable plant.

CH: Now, when you cut it, is it ok to cut just like a top part if you don't want to use too much of the plant? Or do you cut from all the way down here?

S23: Well, well, I'll cut it from the side, not actually from here. You see some that have been cut.

CH: Yeah.

S23: But I'll cut one that is on the side so it doesn't-so it still looks nice, you know, but if I cut a whole plant, I'll cut it about right there. And then I put the rest in a plastic bag because it has so much…if I'm only going to use a piece, I might cut a tip. Just like that much a bit is just for one small skin thing. But if I want to make a gel and save it, I'll cut the whole leaf and then put it in the refrigerator in a plastic bag.

CH: Do you save the whole leaf in the refrigerator in the plastic bag?

S23: Yeah.

CH: How does it long does it last that way?

S23: It'll last a long time, but then if I take the gel out, I cut it open and I scrape and put it there. But this way, if I leave it in the leaf, it preserves it and I only use what I need of the gel.

CH: So, you can just keep cutting pieces and just using what you need.

S23: Yeah. Yeah. If it's for a small thing. My daughter uses it a lot and she'll-well, she's been buying the juice. But she recommends that I, you know, scrape it and you save the gel and then put it in a blender, you know. And just, I guess add water and drink it.

CH: Oh.

S23: But it reminds me of garlic and it's strong. I can't even describe it. Have you?

CH: I've had it before. My mom gave it to me when I was a teenager.

S23: It's very good for your-

CH: I forgot what she gave it to me for.

S23: Well, I was drinking it for a while and I haven't for-because of my stomach and she said, "Well, just drink it all the time." So, I use it quite a bit.

CH: When you say you make a gel, when you scrape it to preserve, what do you preserve it in? Is it ok to preserve in a plastic tupperware? Or do you prefer glass?

S23: Yeah, well, you know, I have some of the pomade-the cosmetic poms, but you could use plastic. Plastic, but some of the glass models-little jars. I'll put it in something like that.

CH: That's-

S23: But if not, in a plastic bag. It'll do just as well.

CH: How long does it last when it's scraped and put into the plastic bag or jar?

S23: Well, usually I just make it to use, so you know, I use it up within a days or week. Two weeks at the most. I usually will not make that much ahead. I'll just use the leaf.

CH: Ok. Sounds good. Do we have anymore plants that wanted to show us?

S23: I don't think so. That's all I have here.

CH: And that was your plantane (platano), you said?

S23: Plantane. Plantane.

CH: Plantane.

S23: Yeah. So, it gives a lot of seed.

CH: Yeah. It's gonna start growing everywhere.

S23: Yeah, it probably will. It usually grows on this side, but I was glad to find one in the back because I like having my plants in the back 'cause you know, I don't have to come out here. And there's so much sun here that you have to continually work the soil. And this is hard soil over here on this side.

CH: Do you use geraniums for any ritual or medicinal purposes?

S23: Well, I do use the leaves for those ceremonial, for the altars, but I told you that-I think it was Teresita or Concha-told me that leaves are good for sores and skin things. But I never used it. So, I know that it has more value to it, so.

CH: More potential.

S23: Yeah. So, that's why I make many cuttings.

CH: Yeah.

S23: I have it everywhere because, actually, the neighbors planted it and then they decided to take it down and this grew on my side so I just decided to put cuttings because it blooms all year. And I like its aroma.

CH: It's very pretty.

S23: Yeah. It fills in the space, too.

CH: Yeah, it's nice. Yeah, I remember you telling me about that. Now I know.

S23: Another fig tree growing here. Whitey. Whitey. Oh, and I got some-I hope it didn't take. Or did it? I brought some [?] (fennel).

MJ: [Inaudible].

S23: It's not dead, but it's under there. I put it in there in the shade so that it will take. But that's a-I love that plant and we used to have it all the time. See? It's still ok. In fact, it looks like it's rooting.

CH: Ooh, a little [Inaudible].

S23: Yeah, but where I lived-when I grew up-I was on the hill. It was filled and I asked this man who cuts my daughter's grass if he could get me some. He said, "Oh, yes, I find it all the time." So, I got this little piece and I've had it there for about a month. And it's not dead.

CH: A weed.

S23: It looks like it's taking. And it's like a weed because it gives so much seed. The flower gives off too much seed.

MJ: So, what? It's gonna plant right in front of it?

S23: This one. This one? Oh, this is the [?] (estafiate). Well, it's another type and this one has a wider leaf. Let's see if I have some. Elena, I was telling them how you have told me about using the aloe vera for your skin and drinking it and so many uses.

Elena: Oh, yeah.

S23: She knows a lot about the aloe vera.

CH: Yeah.

Elena: Yeah, for a lot of things. Ingestinal problems, burns, skin rashes. You can drink it in tea and it's like an expectorate. Excuse me.

S23: No. So, together, I mean, it's really wonderful that one of my children has extended because she's a practitioner. She uses it daily. So, she's done a lot of studying. She went to Mexico and studied with a healer (curandero).

MJ: Really?

S23: And so she learned a lot from him. And then she says from what she's learned from me and my mother and so she's-but she's continually studying. You know, more deeply.

CH: Good for her. Yeah, that's great.

S23: I'm very pleased about that.

CH: I hope one of your grandchildren picks it up, too. And then it can continue in your-

S23: I hope so. I guess at the teenage years, my granddaughter-she's a senior at Roosevelt-she felt very sick and Elena was here that day. Tried to have her take a-Elena mixed a [Inaudible] of certain herbs for her congestion. She couldn't taste. She'd weep. She's like, "Come on you have to take it." She's gagging and I said, "Oh, my God. You're not going to be a true native (indigena) if you can't take-" But she said, "Oh, it tastes-" because it was dark. So, I told her, "You have to take the medicines we have

before you take anything else. Those are gonna help you. And if they don't, well maybe you just need something else, but avoid drugs." That's one of my-definitely.

CH: Yeah. I always prefer taking the herbal stuff than NyQuill or something.

S23: Oh, yes.

CH: NyQuill is always the worst.

S23: Yes. Well, it's a drug, you know. All of them.

CH: It tasted bad and then it knocked you out.

S23: Yeah, it does knock you out. I have [?] (epazote) everywhere. Oh, that's [?] (cedron).

CH: Yeah.

S23: This is another-this is the-I don't have lemon tea (te de limon). I always wanna say that. [?] (cedron) is a basic, wonderful plant and my kids now, all of them use this because they remember me having herbs. Some that they'll take, but anything that looks different or is bitter, they say-I'm taking about my grandchildren.

Elena: Oh, yeah.

S23: But-

Elena: That's what they [Inaudible]. If they ask quick, they don't know.

CH: You just give it to them.

S23: And she prepares her own [Inaudible] and tutors her boyfriend.

CH: Cool.

Elena: Yeah.

CH: So, what's the [?] (cedron) used again for?

S23: Well, it's used for indigestion, for cramps, as a relaxer. It's like a sedative, I think. And it's also very tasty. It's very sweet and very aromatic. It's wonderful.

CH: It is sweet.

S23: I put in a few when I do the sun tea. The regular tea, but I'm getting away from using the black tea and buying green tea.

CH: Green tea.

S23: Or I've made tea just with spearmint (hierba buena) and some of this. Just in the sun and it doesn't turn dark, you know, like the boiled tea, but it's refreshing and it's good.

CH: How do you make your sun tea?

S23: I put water in a jar and just cut the leaves. Wash the leaves. Put all-you need more leaves than you do in an infusion or a hot tea. And just put it in a jar, cover it, put it in the sun several hours, all day and then, yeah.

CH: Nice.

S23: And you cook it.

CH: You could do with that [?] (cedron) and mint?

S23: And mint. Mint-when you put ice in it, it's like an iced tea.

CH: Sounds very refreshing.

S23: It is. And I had some last time for you, but you didn't have it and today I didn't.

CH: Oh, darn.

S23: I know.

CH: Next time if you offer me some water, I'll say, "I'll have some tea."

S23: Yes, I will.

CH: Sounds great.

S23: It is.

CH: So, these are all your plants, then?

S23: Yeah, these are my plants. It's not as many as I would like, but they look good.

CH: It's a real good collection. Oh, your daughter said-

Elena: Don't forget about the [?] (malva).

S23: Oh, yes, but you know, I don't have any right now. It's on the side of the house.

Elena: There's a bunch there.

S23: Yeah. The [?] (malva), you know, it looks like a geranium, but it's-I don't have any right now. Because it grows on the side of the house where it's really dry and I never water. Side of houses, like all the junk that I have. And I pulled one out and put it out here, but I don't know what happened to it. I think it died and I just didn't see it among the geranium. But a [?] (malva) is a good plant to-we always use to have it. My mother use to use it for purging, for cleaning out the toxins, but I know it's also used for your skin.

CH: Ok.

S23: Dear, the [?] (malva), you make it in a [Inaudible] was used for cleaning out your system.

Elena: Yeah.

S23: As an enema, but now, you know, we don't use enemas. Oh, Elena uses enemas.

Elena: I still use it.

S23: You do?

Elena: Yeah, you can use it as a detoxification of the liver. You make it into a tea and then you use that. You can actually drink it, but I've used it for a compress, too.

S23: Yeah.

Elena: Like for skin alterations and you can use it as an enema, just not hot. It has to be-

CH: Do you prepare it in the same way that you would prepare a tea?

Elena: Yeah, you would. You would prepare it exactly the same way.

CH: And then it's-

Elena: And it's not irritate-it doesn't irritate, so you can hold it longer. So, it's a good detoxifer. To detoxify. It's better than coffee. People use coffee enemas to detoxify. The only bad thing about coffee is that it's also a stimulant. I mean a really hot, powerful stimulant which upsets your whole balance of the system. And it actually increases the heat in your body and you don't want that. So, the [?] (malva) is not irritating. It doesn't have that like fire.

CH: Stimulate.

Elena: Yeah. It's not like a fire in the body. It'll cool it down and then it will draw out the toxins. It's really good.

CH: So, is that something that you learned from the healer that you studied with? Or is it something that you've learned-?

Elena: Along the way. I actually talked to my mom. She was the one who told me what it was used for and then you just kind of say, "Well, I'm gonna try it for this." And it has similar properties of other things, so you say, "Well, you know, why not?" And that's how a lot of the herbs are used. You know, you figure…

CH: If it's good for this and they say-

Elena: Let's try it for that and if it works then you do it again.

CH: Sounds good.

Elena: Yeah.

CH: So, enemas are recommendable? You think?

Elena: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

CH: How often do you-?

Elena: Especially if somebody is really sick. The sicker they are, the more drastic the-

S23: The treatment.

Elena: The treatment.

S23: Because enemas are more drastic treatment.

Elena: Yeah. I mean, you want to-

S23: I would avoid it.

Elena: Definitely-

S23: For myself.

Elena: Clean. The number one thing, any illness, number one: is detoxify. So, that for me is powerful. Cleanse. Detoxify it. Cleanse. Start with a clean state because whatever you put into the body isn't gonna work if you don't do that first. It's gonna take a lot longer for the person to get better.

CH: Oh. [Inaudible].

MJ: As long as she's staying close.

S23: Ok, yeah, I just realized that I have a mike and they're [Inaudible] and you don't.

Elena: Yeah. Yeah.

CH: So, that's how you categorize.

Elena: Yeah.

CH: Ok.

Elena: And you do it just systemically. First, everything-for me all illnesses begin in the bowels. If the bowels are upset, everything else: breast cancer, migraines, any disease, always begins here.

S23: You know, I remember when we were talking about the plants that I know. Almost all of them have to do with the stomach.

Elena: Have to do with the stomach.

S23: Almost all of the plants that I have. That's how we were treated, you know. And I never studied scientifically or why, but, you know. What Elena has-nurse's craft-that makes sense.

Elena: Yeah.

S23: People who have used herbs for centuries, they understand that. The detoxifying and the things that start in your stomach.

CH: About-

S23: Most of them are-almost every plant that we used.

CH: So, basically you would recommend having-I don't know. You recommend some system that keeps your bowel system healthy, then? In order to have a balanced self.

Elena: Right. You start there and if the person is really sick and they're still-there's just some movement-that there's not a whole lot of improvement, then you go to the liver. I mean, you go to the biggest filters of the body. The intestines, the liver, then the skin, the kidneys. You kind of go in order. And as you go through each one, that you'll see dramatic changes in the body, in the person. And then, you know, those are the largest organs. The skin, the intestines, the liver and they take in ninety percent of the toxins of your body.

CH: Wow.

Elena: Yeah.

S23: Yeah.

Elena: And that's, you know, it's true. Almost every herb that she's told me about had to do with those things. Cleaning the digestive system, cleaning the [Inaudible]-

S23: Or soothing it.

Elena: Or soothing it. Or the skin.

S23: Yeah. That's-

Elena: Always, those were the three major things that she would tell me. And then now what I've learned, you know, on the academic side, it's, "Oh, it all makes so much sense."

CH: Yeah. You've put it together.

Elena: Right.

CH: That's pretty good. You guys are a team.

S23: Yeah, we-

Elena: We are.

S23: Oh, she's succeeded. The knowledge, but-

MJ: We're running out of film.

CH: Ok.

MJ: So, I'm gonna turn it off.

Elena: Alright.

CH: Ok.

End of Side A

Beginning of Side B

S23: Big one.

Elena: It's like aloe vera. It has so many uses. I mean, just your everyday foods. Cabbage, and parsely, oregano. You know how-

S23: I just took it off.

CH: If you wanna leave her connected with that?

MJ: Yeah, that's fine. We're already hooked up, so [Inaudible].

CH: Ok.

S23: How did you hook it up?

CH: We're gonna set you right there.

S23: Ok.

CH: Unless you wanna hook it if it's in your way.

S23: No, that's fine.

CH: But it's on.

S23: Oh, it's on.

CH: Yeah. We can leave it on.

Elena: There should be a little stool. You can pick her up.

S23: Yeah.

Elena: Here you go.

CH: [Inaudible]. Oh.

Elena: [Inaudible].

CH: Hey.

S23: I think that [Inaudible] had started with garlic, but I think I told you that my daughter had so many more, so much more information. I've actually used the garlic for several things and…I do have-those are the three. Garlic, aloe vera and onion were my top ones. And I was telling her, well, I had mentioned basil.

CH: Oh.

S23: And I'm just kind of learning and you could some more to that, to the [Inaudible]. Well, I had just said-used besides culinary, but it's also a fortifier, for-oh, dear-iron. And just-

Elena: [Inaudible].

S23: Yeah.

CH: So, beans…

Elena: [Inaudible]. No. [Inaudible] the blood.

S23: No, I think that's-

Elena: [Inaudible] the blood.

S23: Basically what I said. Yeah, all those herbs. But I use for culinary purposes, but at the same time they are beneficial to your system.

CH: Nice. Do you want to tell me a little more about the garlic? It's one of your top ones?

S23: Yeah, well, could you-I was telling her how I had given it to me for a glove-a chest [Inaudible] was so strong, but it really helped me. And I almost-

Elena: Bladder infection.

S23: Oh, the bladder infection. It was almost like right away.

Some Man: [Inaudible].

S23: Yes, it's from many infections. Most infections.

Elena: I've used it on the kids for insect bites, you know, ring worms.

SM: Cuts.

CH: Yeah, ok. Yeah.

SM: Cuts. Cold sores.

Elena: Cold sores.

S23: Cold sores.

SM: Fever blisters.

Elena: It's just so hot that you can put it on directly. Even vaginal infection. You can use it like a suppository.

SM: It stings a little bit.

CH: Oh, I heard about that before.

Elena: Yes, it's very powerful. And it's just like you would use like a yeast kind of thing. Suppository for seven days. You do the same with garlic. And each day you just use-the first time you use it, you just insert it and do nothing. You just peel it and insert a clove. The next time you kind of put little scores. You score it. And each night you just add a little more. You crush it and you can add one more or two more. And by the seven day it would be as if you had used the, you know, whatever, those yeast type suppositories. Suppositories without the drugs and all the cleansing and the killing of the yeast. It balances it back out. And then you mix that with yogurt. It's just amazing. And it's soothing. The yogurt soothes and the garlic kills the overgrowth.

S23: Infection.

CH: Ok. So, how would you apply it with yogurt?

Elena: What you can do is-the first six days you do just the garlic insert. During the day you put yogurt, you actually take a spoonful of yogurt and you put it in. And, you know, you have to wear some kind of-

CH: To have a pad thing.

Elena: Right. Through out the day and that will soothe. It will bring back the balance because the garlic will kill the overgrowth, but then you need to replenish to balance it out. And that's what the yogurt will do.

CH: Ok.

Elena: So, it works like magic. It's very soothing. It's very healing and your body will absorb the yogurt.

CH: So, it's a seven-day treatment.

Elena: It's a seven-day treatment.

CH: Just like Monistat Seven or something.

Elena: Right, right. I mean, now they have those that you can do in three days, but the chemicals are bad by themselves. The cure is worst than the ailment. [Inaudible]. Just for your liver and your kidney, it's just the worst thing.

CH: Wow.

Elena: And then the imbalance is the worst. Just like [Inaudible] bad. And that's why garlic is so good because it's a natural [Inaudible]. It's a-it brings out, you know, the natural-it even functions to stimulate the tumor fighting cells. It's really powerful. It's very powerful.

CH: So, when you use this seven-day treatment, you said at first you just take a regular garlic clove-

Elena: Garlic clove.

CH: And insert it.

Elena: And insert it. Don't-

SM: Peel it.

Elena: You have to peel it. Yeah.

CH: Of course. Yeah.

S23: Ow. Feeling rough.

SM: Ouch.

Elena: The next day you score it. You just add little scores because it really doesn't start working until you break the seal. Ok.

CH: Ok.

Elena: It's just to get use to it.

CH: So, the first was just to get you use to it.

Elena: Right. Don't be afraid and it's gonna get lost. That's the other thing. Well, it does go up.

CH: Does it dissolve?

Elena: No.

CH: What happens to it?

Elena: What happens is that when it starts to kill the yeast, the yeast will coagulate and it will look like-it will be easily removed in the morning.

CH: Oh.

Elena: So, you can actually scoop it out.

CH: Scoop it out.

Elena: And you'll see, it'll be like clots, but it won't be-you know, when someone has a discharge, it's like creamy, like yogurt?

CH: Yes.

Elena: But this, it will coagulate and you just kind of pull it out. And you can rinse yourself. Some people have those bottles that they kind of rinse it. That's just to clean it out and then you put the yogurt it.

CH: Ok.

Elena: For the day. Yeah. And your body will actually absorb the odor. So, you don't really get a lot of mess. It's amazing. It's really wild.

CH: Wow. I've never heard of that treatment before.

Elena: And you can even use yogurt at night. Let's say somebody is really irritated and it's itchy and red. Use it at night and it's really-

CH: The yogurt by itself.

Elena: The yogurt by itself.

CH: One spoon. Tablespoon or teaspoon?

Elena: Tablespoon. It's a good, good chunk. [Inaudible]. Don't worry.

CH: And where did you learn that remedy from?

Elena: Well, it's the same thing. You kind of say, "Ok, what is the condition?" And then, you know, I knew what garlic was for and actually, I've heard it from somebody else. About the anti-bacterial, anti-fungal effects of garlic.

CH: So, you try it and it works.

Elena: And also, my boyfriend, he's been doing that forever. He's been doing that for over twelve years now.

CH: Ok.

Elena: Which is not forever, but for-

CH: Yeah, I was just curious because your mom told me that you've also studied with a curandero and when I was in El Salvador, one of the women who I spoke to about remedies, she said, "Garlic is good for vaginal infections."

Elena: Really?

CH: And then my aunt also-my cousin or somebody had some type of yeast infection and my aunt said, "Oh, just take a garlic and rub it in your vaginal area and that should help." But she didn't say anything about-I mean, this is a completely-

Elena: Yeah. Sys-

CH: This is a seven-day treatment.

S23: System.

Elena: Yeah.

CH: Systematic is the word.

Elena: Yeah.

CH: What my aunt had just said was topical application so-

Elena: The only thing about it is that it's very-it's irritating. That's why you do it over seven days. You can do it-you can crush it and put in there, but it will be very irritating and it's not as pleasant. And then if you do it seven days, it's like your sure to get a good cleanse. And that's what you want.

CH: Right. Yeah. That's why you put the yogurt and then-

Elena: Ok.

CH: To do that and balance it out. Yeah.

S23: Alicia, can you life the [Inaudible]-

Alicia: Uh-

CH: Of course, we're talking plain yogurt here.

Elena: Plain, organic, cold yogurt. Not non-fat. And it has to live cultures because-No sugar. No nothing. No vanilla. Plain. Yeah.

CH: Ok.

Elena: The whole, the better.

CH: Ok.

Elena: Yeah. 'Cause it's easier to work with.

CH: Very interesting remedy.

Elena: Yeah. And you can even add other things to the yogurt, but that's more complicated.

CH: Ok.

Elena: Now, of course, if it's a vaginitis, that's bacterial. Then, it will ease your [Inaudible]. Actually, I've seen it work in both cases for some reason. I think because the garlic is so powerful, it ofsets the balance of both the yeast and the bacteria. So, the yogurt is-you know, it works.

CH: So, it does work for bacterial-

Elena: It works. Yeah. In the combination of the two. Vaginitis.

CH: Bacterial vaginitis?

Elena: Right. As opposed to a yeast infection.

CH: Ok. Interesting. All right. You also mentioned ringworms.

Elena: Oh, yeah.

CH: How would you use the garlic for ringworm?

S23: It was-

Elena: You slice it and just right on-

S23: Apply it. Yeah.

Elena: And you use-

S23: My mother would use that for ringworm.

Elena: Yeah.

S23: It burns like hell.

Elena: It burns, but it-

S23: But it works.

CH: Now, does it leave any marks on your skin ‘cause I know somethings if you put it on your skin directly you-

Elena: Get a scar. That’s what the [Inaudible] that did to me the other time. I put too much and it did leave a scar so…you know what’s funny? Yogurt, again.

CH: Yogurt?

Elena: You can do the garlic at night and then put yogurt on the skin. And the body will-your skin will absorb the yogurt right through its skin.

CH: Now, when you put the yogurt on, do you cover that-

Elena: You don’t have to.

CH: It stays on your skin.

Elena: And you know what? When you rub it in, you don’t even see it anymore.

CH: Ok. What about exposure to the sun? Should a person avoid exposure to the sun in the areas that have been treated?

Elena: Usually that’s a good, that’s a very good idea. That’s a very good idea. You don’t want the sun…when you’re getting treated. Yeah. Because that’s another-you can get a scar from that, too. And then you can put a little, you can put aloe vera gel or a olive oil just to kind of keep it moist. So, it doesn’t dry out.

S23: You know, when my mother made a-‘cause I did have [Inaudible] in high school. It was like-I think I told you it was-

CH: Yeah.

S23: And I didn’t want-‘cause to kill it [Inaudible]. Really, she use to use some kind of purple, [?] (purpura). It was a purple-

Elena: Oh, yeah.

S23: Like-I don't know what it was. It was strong.

Elena: Like propolis.

S23: Yeah.

Elena: Propolis is good.

CH: What is that?

Elena: Propolis is the-in the beehive, it's the-it's like the juice in between the wax and the honey. You can-and people use it and that's a good-

S23: It's excellent and it would leave your skin really-but she would buy it. She didn't make it.

Elena: Yeah. Yeah.

S23: It was already prepared.

Elena: Unless you know somebody that's a beekeeper.

S23: Keeper.

Elena: Who does that. They will have propolis for you.

CH: Propolis?

S23: But it was purple and I mean, if you put it on your skin, you had a purple spot. And here I was a teenager.

Elena: And you can make a [Inaudible] out of it. And that's even the better way, you know, 'cause the alcohol will evaporate, but the propolis will-

S23: Well, I think that's what it was because it was like a liquid.

CH: Yeah.

S23: What she did was she used garlic 'cause I wouldn't let her put that on me.

CH: Yeah.

S23: And then she made like a paste with garlic and vaseline. And so I would put that during the day.

Elena: That's a good [Inaudible].

CH: Garlic and vaseline.

S23: The garlic was the main thing. First put it-but then to go to school, she has to keep it moist. Put that.

CH: Yeah.

S23: I was so self-conscious.

Elena: Yeah.

CH: We use to have that purple stuff at home. I don't remember why, but I remember that they to put it-I thought it was iodine.

Elena: Iodine.

CH: Was it iodine?

Elena: Iodine is the other one. Yeah.

CH: Oh, ok.

S23: But-

CH: But it isn't iodine?

S23: But-yeah. It didn't burn, but it would just sting.

Elena: Yeah, iodine doesn't burn, either.

CH: Yeah, we were just purple for a day or so.

S23: Yeah.

CH: Ok. Did you want to tell me a little bit about aloe and your uses of aloe.

S23: Well, I think I covered that. For the skin and then drinking it for the-now, I didn't make the drink myself. Elena gave that to me, but it did-it was for the respiratory and the infections, too. I mean, it's almost like the garlic thing, and then I told you how I use the leaf.

CH: Right.

S23: And put it in a plastic bag.

CH: Right. So, those are your main uses of aloe?

S23: Yes.

CH: The ones that we discusses outside.

S23: Yeah. And she might have more. The skin and drinking it as a respitory (respiratory?)-

Elena: Yeah.

S23: But-burns, you know. Serious sun burns.

Elena: Upset stomach. Gas. You can treat allergies. Just take the pulp from the-put it in cold water. Cold, filtered water and make it so that when the kids look at it, they're like, "Ooh." So, you can smash and kind of make it so palatable. And you can put a little bit of, just like a little bit of lemon and honey. Just for taste. 'Cause you don't want sugar really in it.

CH: Ok. And that's good for stomach problems and gases?

Elena: Digestive type upset. Acid reflux. What it does is that it constantly coats on it, inside of the, you know, your esophagus, with the lining of your stomach and it'll heal it.

CH: How-

MJ: Maybe we ought to have her sit there where you are.

CH: Yeah. That way we can hear you.

MJ: Because you have the sound.

S23: Yeah. Yeah. I think that maybe you could-

CH: If you sit together.

Elena: Oh, all right.

S23: Say it in here. Most of what she has said.

MJ: That was the last one. It was very hard to hear. Yeah, the last set of comments.

Elena: Oh.

CH: So, maybe you could just describe the process again. Of making that aloe drink for the digestive [Inaudible].

Elena: Oh, ok. What you do is you take a whole leaf. You cut the skin off and you scrape off the gel that's on the inside. And it'll last a long time as long as you keep it in the refrigerator. Maybe four days, seven days. You smash it to make it less pulpy, but you have to use it all up. You don't want to-

CH: You have to use the whole leaf?

Elena: Well, you don't have to use the leaf, but you wanna-once you open it, you wanna use the whole thing because-well, actually, to tell you the truth only if you, if you slice it, the aloe will make a scar. So, whatever is inside will still be good. So, that's the [Inaudible] part of it. That's why it's good for the skin because it does-it forms like a bandage. It's great for burns. As soons as somebody gets a sunburn, that's the first thing you put it on because it promotes the healing. It actually promotes the cells to regenerate and it forms like a bandage. And then you can put whatever else on top. But for the drink, you kind of squish it to get a lot of the big chunks out and make it more like a juice. You can add, I mean, mix it with filtered water. It should be cool. And you can add a little bit of lemon juice or a little bit of honey. Although, I rarely use honey because it's sugar. And just drink it. And you drink like a shot on an empty stomach first thing in the morning.

CH: How much water do you add? How much-yeah, how much water do you add? And how much of the green gel from the inside of the aloe do you use?

S23: You proportion, I guess, one part-two parts, or one part-

CH: Water.

S23: Aloe.

Elena: Most of it should be aloe.

CH: So, it's-

S23: Two to one.

CH: Two parts of aloe, one part water? Is this what you're saying or-

S23: Yes.

Elena: I would use even more. Yeah.

S23: More aloe than water. Yeah.

Elena: Yes.

CH: So, how much would be a good measure of the aloe?

Elena: Well, when I use one leaf, I mean, I'm just giving a shot like this. So, I'm condensing it down to [Inaudible]-

S23: In four ounces.

CH: Ok.

Elena: And then I just add a little water just to, you know-

CH: Just to have something-

Elena: Something-

CH: Just so it's somewhat liquid.

Elena: Right. 'Cause it's really thick.

CH: So, yeah, that does look like about four ounces. It's big.

Elena: Yeah.

CH: Ok.

Elena: Yeah. Ok.

CH: So, however, maybe big leaf or what-not, just so you get this much out.

Elena: Right, right. Then you take a-and actually, no, it makes a lot. It makes like maybe a quart.

CH: Yeah.

Elena: It's a quart. And then you just drink that much.

CH: Ok.

Elena: And it's best on an empty stomach without any food.

CH: Ok.

Elena: Because you want it to really coat the [Inaudible]-you want it to coat the inside.

CH: Sometimes-oh, the trashcan. Is it something that you can take at anytime?

MJ: That's about [Inaudible]. That's coming off pretty strong out there.

Tape Paused

Tape Resumed

S23: It works and it's something that is an actual medicine. Medicinal practice. So, it's interesting to me.

CH: Yes.

S23: And I like to hear her what she's learned and applying. What, you know, the remedies because, "That's why it's been working all these centuries." You know.

CH: It's almost like if she's conducting the clinical trials. Right? Like you have certain remedies and then she tests them. And verifies and finds out all the [Inaudible]-

Elena: [Inaudible] how is it that that works.

S23: Yeah, it's a verification. And it's just wonderful.

Elena: And I keep telling her, "Tell me again. Tell me again. What did you do? What did she mix it with?" You know. She can tell me the same story a hundred times just because you get a little bit more out of it.

CH: Yeah.

S23: Sometimes.

CH: I think I ask her questions. The same questions many times, though. Yeah, so we were talking about the aloe just to make sure that we finish getting the details on that one. You explained about the mashing and that this is about the amount that you use and then you were telling me about you only use a little bit of lemon and honey. Just for taste.

Elena: Yeah. I would prefer not to use honey.

CH: Ok.

Elena: If I was going to mix it with anything it might even be a just a little bit about [?] (cedron) tea, you know. 'Cause the two together are really good. One will heal the tissues that are being irritated and the other one is soothing. Kind of just balances the juices, you know. So, I would mix it with-I've never tried that, but I just thought about it like, "Hmm, that would be something ok."

S23: Well, I was telling her that [?] (cedron) as a tea is good just to-it's a soothing-

CH: Calming.

S23: Calming and even as an iced tea. You just put a few leaves and water. Put it out in the sun, add a little bit of mint and it's just refreshing.

CH: So good. And kids don't even recognize that it's [Inaudible].

S23: They drink it.

Elena: They'll just drink it.

S23: Yeah, it's good.

CH: Do you add anything to that? When you make your tea? Your sun tea? Do you add any sweetener of any sort?

S23: No, no sweetener. You don't need sweeteners. So, just ice.

Elena: It's very flavorful. And it's refreshing.

CH: Yes, I know. I was telling her it sounded refreshing. I will never refuse it again.

S23: 'Cause I had made some last time and-

Elena: Oh, you did?

S23: I offered them tea, but they didn't want to drink anything. I think they had water.

Elena: Oh.

CH: Yeah.

S23: Well, we had tea. And today I got up late, actually. And I have to water my plants early, so I tried to do it fast because I wanted to finish by nine. So, I take a couple of hours, you know, watering.

Elena: Watering. [Inaudible] she's up.

S23: Sweeping the cement, cleaning it, and watering it. I then I just love being-I just stay out there. Sometimes they remind me to come in. "You wanna eat something?" "Oh, ok, I'll be there." And I take another half hour.

CH: Maybe the [Inaudible] take over you.

Elena: That's true.

S23: So, I didn't do the tea this time.

MJ: What other plants would you like to have that you don't have out there?

Elena: I would like to have a comfrey plant. We use to have one, actually.

S23: Yeah, we did.

Elena: We use to have a beautiful, big comfrey and-

S23: Well, they did all the-

Elena: It was hot and-

S23: When they did all the plastering, so much of the plaster was dumped along the side.

Elena: It's hard to kill a plant locally.

CH: What's it good for?

Elena: Gosh. 'Cause I'm a chiropractor-anything. Bruises, fractures, things having to do with the bones, tissue, charlie horses are bruises. Sprained ankles, even cuts on the skin. It's so powerful that it literally start to heal the minute you put it on. It'll change the cell [Inaudible]. That is like great for trauma.

CH: How would you topically apply it for a cut? And what type of a cut? Minor cut?

Elena: Oh, yeah. Like something like this.

CH: Ok.

Elena: I would stuff up-first, you have to clean it out because it will start to heal fast. So fast that if it's not clean, it's not clean, whatever is in there will be covered.

S23: You heal it, too.

Elena: If you heal, it will be encapsulated inside.

CH: Ok.

Elena: So, you have to get in there and really clean it out first and then you put it on top. And you put it like a-you make it like a paste and you stuff it in there. And just leave it and it'll start to heal it. Form a scab over it and you leave it on until it falls off. And when

it falls off your [Inaudible]. If you do it right, and it's done immediately, there's no scar and it's beautiful. I mean, it's really beautiful.

CH: Nice.

Elena: Yeah.

CH: And so that's good for cuts.

Elena: It's good for trauma.

CH: Trauma. Yeah, ok. What else did you say was good for bruises?

Elena: Bruises. You can use it as a compress.

CH: How would you make that?

Elena: You soak it in like an infusion, but you don't cook it. It shouldn't boil.

CH: Ok.

Elena: Yeah. They're big leaves. Comfrey comes in big, giant leaves so it's great. So, that when it's fresh, it's really good, although it's just as powerful dry. And you get the water so that it's boiling and then you put the leaf in and you infuse it. And you turn down the heat. And then when it's nice and soft, you just actually get it and you put it right on top of you. Cover it.

CH: Oh, just the leaf.

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